

INTRODUCING THE ORGANIZATION OF TRAFFIC SAFETY

SWISS COUNCIL FOR ACCIDENT PREVENTION (BFU): ORGANIZATION, TASKS AND WORKING METHODS OF THE BFU RESEARCH AND IMPLEMENTATION

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1. MISSION

In the prevention of accidents a distinction is made in Switzerland between occupational and non-occupational accidents. By law it is the bfu's task to deal with accident prevention in the non-occupational sector, i.e., in road traffic, sports, home and leisure and to coordinate the accident prevention activities of other organizations with similar targets. In the non-occupational sector, the bfu aims at reducing accident risks through target-oriented measures and at mitigating the consequences of accidents, thus contributing to an enhanced quality of life.

The bfu is an organization at the service of the general public:

- It functions in a target-oriented, imaginative and forward-looking manner.
- It is politically and ideologically independent.
- Working according to scientific methods, it employs modern means of communication.
- It takes into account the characteristics and abilities of the target groups addressed.
- It places its activities into the context of integral thinking and action. Using the means available, it sets priorities, places the emphasis as required and gives due consideration to cost-effectiveness criteria.

The bfu has no authority to issue directives; it is active in counseling and prepares decision data for safety measures to be

taken by authorities, organizations and private individuals.

2. GOALS

The targets of the bfu in the field of accident prevention in the non-occupational sector are based on

- the current status of safety
- the status of safety in other technical systems
- the risks accepted by society
- what is feasible within a given period of time
- foreseeable technical advances; and
- the appropriateness of the measures to be implemented.

In the mid-term, the bfu intends to make a clear improvement to safety levels in the non-professional sector. The target is to significantly reduce the current overall number of approximately 960,000 accident events in the non-professional sector, particularly where serious injuries and fatalities are concerned. The risk of death as a result of an accident is not to be any higher than the smallest natural risk of death.

The longer-term aim is to design events in road traffic, sport as well as in the home and during leisure time in such a way that nobody will be killed or suffer serious injury (Vision Zero).

3. ORGANIZATION

Founded in 1938, the bfu has had the legal form of a private foun-

dation since 1984. It is responsible to the board of trustees and submits an annual report of its activities to the Federal Council.

The bfu maintains a network of about 1,200 safety delegates throughout Switzerland. They represent the safety interests in their communities. They are elected by the local authorities and normally perform their functions as a secondary occupation.

3.1 Financing

Besides a small amount referring to own services (e.g., comprehensive expert opinions) the activities of the bfu are financed by a surcharge on the net premium of the obligatory non-occupational accident insurance for all gainfully employed persons and means of the Road Safety Fund (structural contributions from the monies of the compulsory motor vehicle structural liability insurance and project-related contributions).

3.2 Organization chart

The bfu employs a staff of more than 90, approximately one third of whom work part-time. The bfu is divided into 4 organizational sectors.

- **The Communication Sector**
having close contact with media specialists in the fields of printed matter and electronics. Issue of press releases, raw material for the media, documentations and the internet website. Publication of the specialist journal "bfu aktuell".

- **The Logistics Sector**

with the departments of Informatics and Operations. This includes operation and maintenance of the entire infrastructure for electronic communication, the distribution of materials and documentations as well as the production of printed matter. Besides in this sector the bfu's own library and pictorial archives are managed as well.

- **The Technical Sector** with the departments

Technical Research: Planning, management and performance of technical research projects, interdisciplinary cooperation with other institutions, using the statistical data bases of bfu for research and information purposes; production of working materials,

Traffic Engineering: Expert opinions and reports on road construction and signal projects upon request from political authorities, organizations and individuals; working out solutions for technical problems, in order to improve safety; localization of danger spots in road traffic and preparation of projects for remedial action on dangerous road sectors,

Sport: Realization of accident prevention measures to reduce the collective and individual risk in sports.

Home and Leisure: Advice given to private persons, architects, authorities on construction, living,

the garden, leisure time; production of media for use; development of safety products.

- **The Sector of Human Factors** with the departments

Human Research: Procurement of basic data in the area of psychological accident prevention; studying of specialized literature, behavior analyses, opinion polls, monitoring of performances; production of working materials,

Education: Planning and conception of measures for safety education of children and young people; information and documentation of teachers and traffic instructors; training and making trainee teachers aware of how to approach accident prevention topics within the framework of health promotion at schools; launch of psychological-pedagogical interventions for traffic delinquents,

Campaigns: Motivation of specific target groups or of the entire population for safety-conscious behavior and personal responsibility by means of preventive campaigns; information on statistically frequent types of accidents and their prevention, using various working materials and media,

Safety Delegates: Submission of suggestions for the removal of dangerous spots in the communities; participation in bfu-campaigns, organization of local campaigns; counseling of political authorities,

associations, societies and of the population.

4. ACTIVITIES

The bfu strives for interdisciplinary preventive measures, combining and integrating the areas of technology, psychology, education, law, medicine, social aspects and the media. Areas of safety work in which bfu is active:

1) Research

- accident statistics
- accident analyses and research of causes
- systems analyses
- safety and risk analyses
- target group analyses
- trend analyses
- evaluation procedures,

2) Education and training

- safety education for children
- training of adolescents and new drivers
- drivers' advanced training and retraining
- training of multipliers (prospective teachers)
- support for teaching staff with teaching aids designed to promote safety
- accident prevention training for senior citizens,

3) Communication and campaigns according to target groups, including

- media
- multipliers

- specific working materials
- exhibitions
- information booklets
- Internet
- TV and movie ads,

4) Counseling

- system counseling (authorities, associations, companies)
- individual counseling,

5) Law

Legal service:

- dealing with penal law issues, liability law, road traffic law, etc. for the attention of public authorities, associations, institutions, companies and individuals,
- producing surveys and submissions to public authorities and courts; producing statements on legal and regulatory drafts

in the field of non-professional safety legislature (AIL, STEG, Road Traffic Act SVG and associated regulations),

Product safety:

- increasing the general awareness of manufacturers, importers, the trade and consumers for product safety matters,
- promoting products and equipment that are specially designed to be accident-safe or fulfill a special safety function. Also services that promote accident prevention can be given the safety mark,
- planning and coordination of market observation; market control and arrangement of measures for technical devices and equipment in the non-occupational sector.

The bfu cooperates with organizations and partners with similar objectives, among others with authorities, insurers, institutions, international organizations and with research establishment at both domestic and foreign universities.

5. TASKS ACCORDING TO PRIORITIES

Safety work is guided by priorities, i.e., by the areas in which accidents:

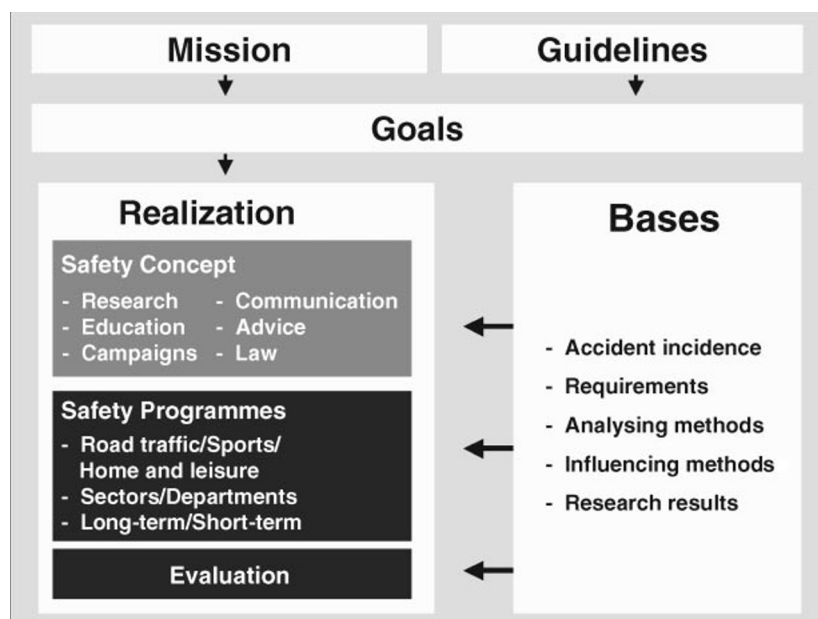
- happen frequently;
- have serious consequences; and has to be done where:
- persons take great risks or are compelled to expose themselves to great risks;
- dangers cannot be foreseen; or
- risks can be avoided with modest means.

5.1 Numbers of accidents

Today already there are more non-occupational than occupational accidents. As the leisure time and the possibilities to spend it increase, this tendency will become even more distinct. Thus absences from the job due to accidents will increasingly be caused by non-occupational accidents.

The extrapolation (based on the AIL and fatality statistics, the road accident statistics registered by the police as well as bfu studies on accidents suffered by children and senior citizens) reveal that each year one in ten inhabit-

bfu's safety work



ants suffers a non-professional accident requiring medical assistance. The highest number of accidents relate to the home and leisure periods while the most serious accidents occur on the roads (the highest number of fatalities per 10,000 persons injured).

Each year in Switzerland approx. 1,230,000 persons have an accident (2,070 among them are fatalities) **of which** 960,000 in the non-occupational sector (1,860 among them are fatalities) **of which :** 100,000 in road traffic (580 among them are fatalities) 3,000 other types of traffic (30 among them are fatalities) 296,000 in sports (160 among them are fatalities)

561,000 in home and leisure (1,080 among them are fatalities).

If we take the number of persons killed in traffic accidents per 100,000 inhabitants, Switzerland is in the bottom third in international comparison.

5.2 Emphasis of accidents

The emphasis of accidents according to frequency and seriousness, with which the bfu mainly deals in road traffic is on

- children as pedestrians, who are not (yet) able to meet the demands of hectic road traffic (age 5 to 9)
- senior citizens and pedestrians who for physical reasons and due to a lack of overview are

no longer able to meet the demands of today's traffic (age 70 and older)

- bicycle and motor-assisted bicycle drivers (age 10 to 17)
- young people detaching themselves from their parents, looking for their identity, enjoy their mobility and, especially as drivers of motor-assisted bicycles (age 15 to 17) and of scooters (from 16 up) are subjected to above-average risks
- young car and motorcycle drivers who are prepared to take risks and have little experience (age 18 to 24). They often cause self-inflicted accidents out of town, which are due to excessive or inappropriate speed.

5.3 Causes of accidents in road traffic

- lack of driving competence (training)
- driving inability (alcohol, tiredness, medicine)
- non-adjusted speed (pressure of time, stress, habit)
- inadequate road design
- insufficient use of and defective safety equipment (belt, helmet, lights).

Opinions about enforcement in Switzerland; Question: "How likely is it that you will be checked regarding alcohol or speed or encounter a radar box during a normal trip by car?"

